

Madhva's Textual expositions in the Rāmāyana.
(Rt Honble Srinivasa Sastriar Lecture delivered on Rāma Navamī, March 25-1961 under the auspices of the Samskṛta Academy, Mysāpore).

स्वस्वतः निश्चिन्तय दहन् परामृतं यद्युक्त्वं मानय भव मम शरणम् ।
शुभतमं कथाश्रय परमं सदैवदितं जगदेककारणं रामं स्मरामहे ॥
(मध्वस्य द्वादशस्तोत्रे IX. ॥)

जयत्यजोऽक्षीणसुरवात्मविम्बः स्वैश्वर्यकान्तिप्रतप्तः सदैवदितः
स्वभक्तसन्नापदुरिष्टहन्ता रामावतारो हरिरीशचन्द्रमाः ॥
मध्वस्य महाभारतात्पर्यनिर्णय III. 2.

With these invocations composed by Madhva addressed to Rama, I deem it a privilege to address the devotees of Rama in the Samskṛta Academy; my father's name was also Ramachandra. Madhva was a great Ramabhakta and many of the Mathas established by him at ~~his birthplace~~ and my birthplace also) and elsewhere worship Rama as their chief deity today.

Srimad Rāmāyana is acclaimed as शरणम् - गतिशास्त्र not only by the Viśiṣṭādvaitins but by all other Vaiṣṇavite cults in India. Madhva it was who gave us the textual criticisms of our three national epics, the Rāmāyana, Bhārata and Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In this he followed the lead of Anandavardhana (who flourished under Avantivarman in Kashmir, 854 to 885 A.D.) who postulated in his Uddyōta (accepter) of his Dhvanīśloka that Bhārata Epic was dominated by Shāntarasa and Rāmāyana by Karuṇarasa - प्रबन्धोऽयं अङ्गी (important) रसः एक एवोपनिबधमानः अर्थविशेषकम् छायातिशयं च पुष्पाति । कस्मिन्निव इति चेत्, यथा रामायणे, यथा वा महाभारते

रामायणे हि कुरुणे रसः स्वयमादिकविना आह्वयितः 'श्रीकः
लोकत्वमागतः' इत्येवंवादिना । निर्व्यूढश्च स एव सीतायन्त-
विशेषोपपत्तिमेव स्वप्रबन्धं उपरजयता ।

A true SAHRIDAYA, whose recent death was mourned by our Sanskrita Academy a couple of months ago, I mean Sahitee Vallabha Shrivali Sundarachariar drew pointed attention to the great work of Sri Madhva as a great critic in the course of his review, in the columns of the Hindu, of the Lectures delivered on the Mahābhārata by the late V. S. SUKTHANKAR published in the ~~Journal of Banbhanga~~ of Banbhanga. He said "That the groundwork or the scheme of the epic was first discovered or propounded in a massive form by Bhagavan Ānandatīrtha, but this is acknowledged only casually in the last few lines of the last lecture. But it will be no disrespect to the memory of the great scholar to affirm that the only and true begetter of the entire interpretation here enshrined is that of Bhagavan Ānandatīrtha who made the Bhāratam his forte in addition to his encyclopaedic attainments."

The very fact that Madhva calls his work तत्पर्यनिर्देश is sufficient testimony for his

निर्जगः सर्वशास्त्राणां सदृष्टान्तै हि भारते ।

कृते विष्णुवशात्वं हि ब्रह्मादीनां प्रकाशितम् ॥

यतः कृष्णवशे सर्वे भीमाद्याः सम्मगीरिताः ।

सर्वेषां ज्ञानदे विष्णुः यशोदातेति चेदितम् ॥

प्रियश्च विष्णोः सर्वभ्य इति भीमनिदर्शितम् ।

भूभारहरणे विष्णोः प्रधानाहुः हि मारुतिः ॥

भस्माद्वरप्रवृत्तस्य रामकृष्णान्मनो हरैः ।

अन्तरंगं हन्तुमांश्च भीमस्तत्कार्यसाधकौ ॥

इत्यादि कथितं सर्वं ब्रह्माण्डे हरिणा स्वयम् ।

मार्कण्डेयैऽपि कथितं भारतस्य प्रशंसनम् ॥

आलोड्य सर्वशास्त्राणि विचार्य च पुनः पुनः ।

इदमेकं सुनिष्पन्नं ध्येयो नारायणः सदा ॥

That Madhva had access to a number of Puranic Texts composed by Vedavyasa ~~and other sages~~ particularly to ~~the~~ and a ~~number of~~ composed also by the same - is quite clear from the various texts from the various Puranas quoted in the course of his commentaries. Here for example, he mentions how Hari or Vyasa had declared in his BRAHMAANDA PURANA that Hanuman and Bhima were the two persons who helped him in the task of भूभारहरण, the main purpose of the incarnations of Hari. A little pondering over the slokas quoted above would convince everybody of the critical acumen of Madhva even 700 years prior to the establishment of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. I may add that these principles deserve to be exhibited prominently on the walls of that Institute rather than be simply referred to at the fog end of the last lecture. Madhva travelled all over India collecting manuscripts and examined critically the various readings particularly in the light of the explanations.

offered by Vyasa Himself in the course of His NIPURTA and Brahmatarika which were available to him, but which are unfortunately lost for us now.

The Avatāra doctrine casually referred to just now leads us to the consideration of the Western Critics particularly Dr Jacobi (pronounced Yajacobi) and others who reject the idea that Rama was an Avatāra of Vishnu. They assert dogmatically that this idea is uppermost only in the two Kāṇḍas, Bāla and Uttara and consequently these are according to them interpolations. I will simply quote here the late Sridharacharya's remarks in the course of his review in the Hindu of the Rāmāyana by our revered C.R. in the Bhavan's Book University series. 'The fact is that the theory of Rama's अवतार or divinity is both in the warp and woof of the narrative (vide अष्टादश प्रकाश VI - 114-9, 14 to 17); it cannot be removed except by such vandalistic treatment as would leave all the most impressive parts of it in irreparable ruin'. These two Kāṇḍas alone provide the proper background and the necessary finale to the epic, to use the same scholar's figurative phraseology, provide the proper perspective in which the plot of the epic is reared. To come back to our subject, Anandavardhana's testimony to the genuineness of the UTTARAKANDA where alone the अवतारयोग or final separation of Sita takes place by her disappearance into the bosom of the earth has already been quoted; Maithra also accepts this as genuine by summarising this part of the epic in 143 verses in his 9th adhyāya. This Rama epic is epitomised beautifully in six chapters (4 to 9) in his Mahābhārata Tātparyā Nirṇaya. The language is sometimes reminiscent of Kālidāsa's summary in Cantos X to XVI in his Raghuvamśa. Towards the end of the last chapter, he says that Sita lived underground, unseen by all except by Rama, for 700 years - रामस्य दृश्या तन्मयेषां अदृश्या जनकात्मजा । भूमिप्रवेशान् उद्धर्त्तुं सार्वभौमः सप्तशतं समाः ॥ What his authority for this

statement was is not clear, but he should have based his statement on some Puranic text of Vedavyasa. By the way, it may be mentioned that Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti regarded this Kanda also as authoritative and based their Raghuvamśa XIV canto and Uttararamacharita respectively on this Kanda. This word Uttara deserves better to be explained as excellent, rather than later (Kanda). In proof of this I quote verses 125 et seq from that very chapter where just before concluding he mentions his principles once again:

इत्यशेषपुराणेभ्यः पञ्चरात्रेभ्य एव च ।
 भारताञ्चैव वेदैर्भ्यो महारामायणादपि ॥
 परस्परविरोधस्य ह्यनन्विनीयं तत्त्वतः ।
 युक्त्यो दुर्बलान्तरैश्च विष्णोरेव प्रसारतः ॥
 बहुकल्पानुसारेण मयैवं सत्कथयिता ।
 नैकगुणश्रया तस्मान्नाशं स्यान्न विरुद्धता ॥
 क्वचिन्मोहायासुराणां व्यत्यासः प्रतिलोमता ।
 उक्ता ग्रन्थेषु तस्माच्च निर्णयोऽयं कृतो मया ॥
 पुंन्यत्यासेन शोक्तिः स्मृत्युराणादिषु कुत्रचित् ।
 कृष्णामाह यथा कृष्णो धनञ्जयप्रशरैः हतान् ॥
 वातं दुर्योधनादींस्तैर्दर्शयिष्ये इति प्रभुः ।
 भीमसेनहताः तैर्लु शायन्तै बहुवाक्यतः ॥
 विस्तारे भीमनिहताः संक्षेपेऽर्जुनपातितः ।
 उज्जन्तै बहुव श्रान्तै पुंन्यत्याससमाश्रयात् ॥
 विस्तारे कृष्णनिहताः वक्रभद्रहता इति ।
 उज्जन्तै च क्वचित्काकव्यत्यासोऽपि क्वचिन्न वेत् ॥
 यथा सुयोधनं भीमः प्राह स कृष्ण सन्निधौ
 इति वाक्येषु बहुषु शायन्तै निरयिदापि ॥

Thus Madhwa based his work upon on the Puranas,

the Pañcharātra, Bhārata, Vedas and Mahārāmāyaṇa, that this last is we do not know, but evidently it was a bigger epic on which Valmiki had based his work. Discrepancies there might exist between some Puranic statement of Krishna's narration to Draupadi that Bhishma killed one of Duryodhana's brothers, while somewhere else Arjuna might have been spoken of as having killed the same. Somewhere again the chronology of the death might be different and so on. Such discrepancies should be decided in the light of my NIRWĀYA said Mathura.

This reminds us of the way in which some Western critics glibly ^{deprecate} that Rama saying to Sīmanakṣa that Lakshmana was अकृतदार: or unmarried should be treated as an interpolation simply because this would conflict with the Balakanda story where the four brothers ~~had~~ married the four sisters in Mithila. The correct interpretation of the word was given by Govindarāja the famous commentator as असहकृतदार or that his wife was not accompanying him. In this way, possible contradictions which are inevitable in such texts of voluminous lengths should be carefully explained away and not brushed aside as interpolations. Similarly if in one of the two tables of Contents juxtaposed in the first and third (parts) of the Balakanda, namely in the first, we read:

समुद्रं क्षेमयामास शरैः आदित्यसंनिभः
दर्शयामास चात्मानं समुद्रः सरितां वतिः
समुद्रवचनाञ्चैव न त्वं सेतुमकारयत्
तेन गत्वा पुरीं लंकां दृष्ट्वा रावणमाहवे ।
रामः सीतामनुप्राण्य पुरीं व्रीडामुपगमत्
तामुवाच ततो रामः परुषं जनसंमति
अभृष्यमाणा सा सीता पुरीं व्रीडामुपगमत्
रामो वीच ततो रामः विवेश ज्वलनं सती

Western critics jump up with joy and declare that the Lankādhāna episode is not included herein and so it is not genuine. Nothing could be obviously be more ridiculous than such a conclusion. The other table of Contents in the 3rd chapter does include this, and this might have been dropped out for purposes of brevity or for some other reason. Similarly if ~~one of the~~ ~~two tables~~ if the Western critic cannot accept that Rama is an Avatāra, we need have no quarrel with him; but for us it is an important article of faith in our religion and we accept it as an इष्टावधि or a desired conclusion. C.R. says 'Those who read the Ramayana as a mere tale would find all this pointless; Bhakti is needed to realise its full meaning.'

The Bharata Epic is explained as the tragedy of Rama and Madhva explains in adhyaya XI Verses 154 et seq the story of his birth. He was born as we all knew, when Surya approached the virgin Kunti-

स (सूर्यः) तेन जज्ञिवान् स्वयं द्वितीयरूपको विभुः ।
 स कर्मदिग्गुण्डलैर्ज्वलन्निव स्वतेजसा ॥
 पुरा स वालिमात्रं प्रभूतदोषकारणात् ।
 सहस्रवर्त्मभिनासुरेण वेष्टितोऽजनिः ॥
 यथाग्रहैः विदूष्यते मतिर्नृणां तथैवाहि ।
 अभूच्च दैत्यदूषिता मतिर्दिकाकरात्मनः ॥
 तथापि रामसेवनादुरेश्वरसन्निधानमुक्त ।
 सुदर्शनोऽनीयकर्षितः स कर्षणामकोऽभवत् ॥

Evidently he read according to Madhva (in these slokas in the peculiar dancing metrical verse) the reason for the Bharata Tragedy. Sahasrakarma, a Rakshasa, possessed Rama at his birth, because Surya was ultimately responsible for the death of Vali in the TRETAA Yuga. Thus according to Madhva alone, the proper explanation for

Vali's death is that Sugriva abetted the crime, but because he had, in that context, helped Rama through his son Sugriva, his ears were extremely handsome and enabled him to possess the name Karna; but some Rakshasa possessed him at birth and was the sole cause of his illluck. Madhva seemed to suggest that Vali was killed even before the latter could see him, if he had seen him, true Bhakta that he was, he would certainly have prostrated him and Rama could have had no other alternative but to show him mercy; but he had, already on Hanuman's advice, accepted to befriend Sugriva and so he was forced to kill him when Vali had not seen him; we read in VI. 19 et seq.

भक्तो ममैव यदि मामभिपश्यति ह पादौ ध्रुवं मम समेष्वपि
निर्विचारः ।

योगो वदते न हि जनस्य पदान्तस्य राज्यापि नारविमुतेन
वदतेऽपि तदा ।

रावं स कृष्णतनुः अर्जुनमपरिभक्तं भीमार्जमेव तदरिं शवेजं निहत्य
पूर्वं हि मारुतिमवाप रवैः सुतोऽयं तेनास्य वाह्निमहूतं रघुपः प्रसीपं
कार्यं ह्यभीष्टमपि तत्प्रणतस्य पूर्वं शस्त्रो वदते न पदयोः प्रणतस्य चैव ।
तस्माददृश्यतनुरेव निहन्मि शक्रं मुनें . . .

Here then we have a satisfying answer to the insoluble riddle of the supposed injustice of Rama's action in killing Vali. unobserved by him. He had no other alternative left in the circumstances. Both the Epics must be taken into consideration for pronouncing judgment over Rama and Vali. If Sugriva did more service in the earlier epic, he had to be satisfied with less service or even disservice in the next; while if Vali had done positive disservice in the earlier epic, he was sincerely repentant and as Arjuna he made amends for his previous sin. Rama was helped by Hanuman, the gods were on Sugriva's side, it was only for this that Indra became Bhima's brother in the later

epic as he was sincerely repenting for his former disservice
 as Vali: अप हर्षानुतापेन तेन भीमस्तथाकरोत् । In other
 words, Bhima (in the later birth) and Hanuman (in the
 former birth) were the principal lieutenants and the
 rest had simply to carry out their directives off and
 on. Bhima is made bossy by Madhwa

आराधयामि भणिसन्निभमात्मविभं मायापुरे हृदयपंकजसन्निविष्टम्
 शङ्खानन्दविमलचित्रजलाभिषेकं भावाष्टपुण्याविधिने हरिमर्षयामि ॥
 Later he declares, evidently from some Puranic authority
 which also seems to have been followed by TULASIDAS
 and Kambar, that the image of Sita alone was stolen
 by Rama and not the original as reported in Valmiki
 सृष्ट्यात्मिनः प्रतिकृतिं प्रययौ न शीघ्रं कैकासमर्पितपदान्यवसाचिवाञ्छां

V-37.
 Kambar, it is well known, declared that Hanuman took
 away the entire Athrama of Sita and could not even
 touch her.

In another sweet lyric Madhwa enlorges Valmiki
 यत्पादपङ्कजजः शिरसा विभर्ति श्रीरञ्जजक्ष गिरिशः सह लोकपालैः
 सर्वेश्वरस्य परमस्य हि सर्वशत्रोः किं तस्य शत्रुजने कथं सहायः
 that all the lower gods like Lakshmi, Brahma, Siva
 and other Lords of the Quarters put the dust of His Feet
 on their heads and that He managed to receive the help
 from the monkeys in destroying His enemies. The moral
 of the Epic can be put down thus that desire should
 not lure us into sin, that virtue alone protects us,
 nor wealth or might, that even death delights him
 who is righteous, that ^{a man} has no fear from misery.

A Sanskrit poet put it thus:
 धर्मश्च रक्षति नरं न वलं धनं वा धर्मः मुरवाय महते न वद्धि विकासः
 धर्मेन न च मुदमेव करोति मृत्युः न ह्यस्ति दुर्गतिभयं निरतस्य धर्मे
 As Madhwa put it in another context in the same NERAYANA
 ११. निजानुभववर्जिता दृष्टेरनुग्रहेन्द्रिताः

महप्रयत्नवाजिताः जनान् जग्मुः उन्नतिम् । (Not fretting
takings, if they could not receive Hari's blessing, we will
always end as failures. Let us cleanse our hearts
in all sincerity and pray with the definite conviction
that He will certainly banish Kāma or lust, anger and
greed from our minds:

धर्मो रक्षति सत्यसन्धश्च रामो दाशरथिः ह्ययम् ।

कामं क्रोधां च लोभं च हृदयान्मे नाशयिष्यति ॥

The Rt Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastriar, in whose honour, this
lecture is being delivered, summed up this epic in the
language of an English poet as justifying the way
of God to man. Could we not echo this and say that
both God and man try to justify their ways to each
other, the Nara and Narayana both find their best
culmination and synthesis in Rama as envisaged
by Valmiki for us? ~~My~~ revered Gurm, the late Prof
S. Kuppuswami Sastriar first emphasised this God-man
synthesis when he declared: The author of the Ramayana
thinks in a happy way two ideas - that God fulfils Himself
in the best man, Sri Ramachandra and that man as Dasha-
ratha's son rises to his full stature by pulling his manhood
to the level of Brahmanhood. 'Ramayana is applied Dharma-
sashtra and is the शान्द of the Bharata culture and
civilisation.

A study of the Ramayana, again, makes one think
that when once a type of evil took flesh and blood as Taatakas
and is killed by Rama, it cannot be entirely annihilated. Like
Ravana's cutheads reappearing, these evil forces resurrect
themselves and Madhwa explains that Pootana of the Bhagam
and Taatakas of the Ramayana are but two phases of the
same evil and the eternal struggle between Good and Evil
provides the necessary contextual environment for the human
soul in its Pilgrim's Progress. In this particular context,

he differs from Pradhana and other Commentators of the
 Bhagavata. They declare that Pootanaa received Moksha
 while Madhwa explains that there is a double jeera
 aavesha or 'possession' in Pootanaa, the Good and the
 Evil, the Good alone being eligible for Moksha while
 the other is eligible only for eternal Hell as per its desert.

अर्जनं भवबीजानां अर्जनं सुखसम्पदाम् ।
 तर्जनं यमदूतानां राम रोमेति गर्जनम् ॥

Crying aloud to Rama

to the trying of the seeds of Samsara.

It is the earning of happiness and prosperity.

It is the searing away of Yama's messenger.

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